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"Stories of Whiston."

by Otto Bacher.

pig, Polly loved bees, Hebe modeled in clay, Roderick multiplied prairie dogs, Jamie was divided between lizards and electric inventions, and Dicky—Dicky only cared for the fiddle. But the drawing-room had the best acoustic properties in the house, so farewell to its trappings. This fiddler was so very young that years of practice stretched *tweet-tweet*-ing away in Josephine's confounded ears. These were the amusements that filled in the chinks of their existence.

It was not John's fault. If Dick had not had so many sides, his children would not have typified so many tastes and tendencies. When individual research was added to the traits of the curriculum, it really seemed as if no pursuit were without a votary in that household.

"It 's simply a revelation of the wealth in the human brain," said John, and he invited men of learning to the house "just to count the proclivities that one little family can show." At the intimation of strangers, Mrs. Veray had a moment of hope. Any outsider, she believed, would laugh John out of his follies; but when a bevy of eleven distinguished idiots had congratulated *her*, the fate that overtakes primitive standards in a progressive world closed about her. She drooped to the eternal feminine.

"Why," cried the daunted egoist, all forlorn—"why, if it was only for this, did he marry me?"

But if we must pity Josephine, we must also be pleased to note how forsaken are the paths of evil when the arrows of education darken the air. There was now only one slim, pale bone of deviltry in the poor woman's cupboard—a revenge without distinction or novelty. She fixed her price, and waited; and her moment ripened apace.

Suddenly the youngest girl leaped from mud-pies to "Dick's color sense," and after the rally of John's artist friends to select a studio, Mrs. Veray's sewing-room was no longer to be seen.

Hitherto Josephine had felt the subtle disadvantage of pushing her claims in the face of John's mad surrender of himself and properties. Abnegation was Josephine's preferred retreat, and there

John had unmistakably gone before. But with the rape of the sewing-room, she came into her own again. At last she had a grievance that would hold water—salt water. It was irreproachable, womanly, and well-nigh saintly to protest that the loss of a spot to mend in was injury unforgivable. The family stockings, which have been the stronghold of so many designing women, were never more boldly occupied than by Mrs. Veray. Man who weareth stockings hath given hostages to fortune. Even the uncle of seven angels would have to listen to her now, and her favorite accents of reproach were heard again:

"Of course I have seen for some time that there was not room for me to live here; but if there is not even room for me to sit down and darn a stocking, I am afraid I shall have to seek protection—elsewhere. How gladly would I go out alone into the world and travel if—"

It was certain that John was listening now. Again he looked at Josephine meditatively. He did not say, as he might have said, that the family stockings were the theme in the weekly sewing-class, and that he walked on hubbles because it stimulated the children to their best effort when they were allowed to darn for him. He only said:

"Do you need money, Josephine? I am afraid you will never be happy here; but I need not say how glad I should be to know you were comfortable—somewhere."

As a humble highwayman Mrs. Veray might have become famous. She named the half of his fortune as the bribe of freedom.

"It 's not that money can compensate," said she, letting condescension do what it could to cover her retreat: "even with Dick I had a sewing-room."

"I understand perfectly," said John.

As soon as he was alone, the mind of the faithful uncle flowed back to its accustomed channel, and he fell to pondering bright new uses for Josephine's apartments. But suddenly he thought of his own part in this history.

"And, now, who 'll tell me why she married me?" he asked himself.

STORIES OF WHISTLER¹

BY OTTO BACHER

WOLKOFF, THE RUSSIAN IMITATOR

ONE evening there was a convivial gathering of men from many different nations seated about a table in an open court of the Bauer Grünwald, a well known Venetian restaurant. The conversation, I believe, was in English, and the subject of Whistler's pastels was brought up by one of his enthusiastic American admirers. A Russian named Wolkoff was flippant and depreciating, ridiculing them as works of art, jeeringly saying that he was willing to bet that he could make half a dozen pastels as good as Whistler's, and, if they were mixed with his, nobody could tell them apart. The American was surprised at this attitude and remarked:

"I 'll bet a champagne dinner for all present that you can't."

"All right, I 'll take your bet, and prove what I say; but I will make one condition only, and it must be agreed upon by all present: I must be permitted to see Whistler's pastels before I begin."

"I will agree to that, and arrange a day when you can see them."

All this was unknown to Whistler, who was innocent of the reason for the call of his Russian guest. He received him charmingly, and showed him all his pastels. These he pinned on large cardboards, carefully, almost ceremoniously, and placed them before him upon a chair that served as an easel. This was the usual way he exhibited his pastels or etchings at home. The Russian was not heard from for six weeks. Then, the committee in charge was informed that he could not go on because he found it impossible to purchase in Venice the peculiar, brilliant pastels with which Whistler obtained his effects.

The American would not let him slip through in that way, so he managed to make it possible for his Russian friend to select numerous small pieces from Whistler's own pastel-boxes. He selected all he wanted, or thought he needed, for the easy task of making a Whistler pastel, and after this exceptional accommodation, returned to his work, saying he would be ready for the jury in a week.

How or by whom the six jurors were selected I do not know, but I remember that two strangers, an Austrian and a Dutchman, were among them; Spain was represented by Martin Rico, England by Henry Woods, R.A., and America by Frank Duveneck and myself. By this time Whistler knew of the wager. The jury met in a house on the Riva not far from the Casa Jankovitz, near enough for him to bring his pastels conveniently. The meeting was in a very long room facing the lagoons. The American who had accepted the wager was not there; Wolkoff was at home, sick in bed; Whistler was in the darkest and farthest corner, with his back to the company and his pastels on a long table. I was selected to bring each exhibit from Whistler's hands and place it on a high-backed chair.

It was an extraordinary position in which Whistler was placed, and a veritable ordeal which he faced. He was serious and wore a troubled look, the truth being that he was nervous at the possibility that the jury might let one of the Russian's pastels slip by as one of his own. I am glad to say, however, that, whenever a Wolkoff appeared, it was instantly received with groans and shouts of "Take it away!" Not for one moment was there the least doubt or a dissenting voice.

¹ See also "Whistler in Venice," CENTURY for December, 1906.

These pastels were put on view at a special exhibition given by him in London during the winter of 1881. The following extracts from a letter concerning them record the favor with which they were received in London.

As to the pastels, well—they are the fashion. There has never been such a success known. Whistler has decorated a room for them,—an arrangement in brown, gold, and Venetian red,—which is very lovely, and in it they look perfect gems. All the London world was at the private view—princesses, painters, beauties, actors, everybody. In fact, at one moment of the day it was impossible to move, for the room was crammed. Even Whistler's enemies were obliged to acknowledge their loveliness. The criticisms were one and all high in their praise.

One of them published the story of Wolkoff, the Russian imitator, and said he was obliged to take a course of mud baths after his defeat. Altogether it has been a great lark, and Whistler has often said, "Would n't the boys appreciate the fun of all this?"

I am going to send you a little book of all the cuttings of the newspapers, so that you can see for yourself.

The best of it is, all the pastels are selling. Four hundred pounds' worth went the first day; now over a thousand pounds' worth are sold. The prices range from twenty to sixty guineas, and nobody grumbles at paying for them.

Maud Whistler.

THE SECRET OF DRAWING

"BACHER, what would you give Whistler if he would tell you his secret of drawing correctly?"

"What can I give you for it, Jimmy?" I answered earnestly. "You know everything I own, and have here. Just tell me what you want me to give you?"

"But would n't you like to know Whistler's secret?"

"Of course, I should; but why do you tantalize me when you know perfectly well that everything I have has been at your disposal if you want it. Why don't you express a wish for something you want in exchange for your secret?"

"But, Bacher, you don't seem to realize the value of Whistler's secret. If you had, you would have told him how much you would give to know it."

I could have offered him some fabulous sum to please him for the moment; but I

did not, and told him instead that I did not think he had a secret at all, and that if he had a valuable one, he would tell it. From his evident irritation and hasty retort I dreaded something awful. "Perhaps," I thought, "I shall now see him as he looked in that detestable photograph with an evil sneer he once showed me—a picture he was fond of, and wished the world to know him by, while he talked caressingly of the sneer as the way Whistler would look at his enemies."

My painful emotion vanished when I saw on his face a playful expression that mellowed with good humor to the kindest and most lovable look. He ended the subject in a jolly tone, saying, "Bacher, you will never know what you have lost."

In London, six years after, I asked Whistler if he remembered what he told me about his secret of drawing. He looked at me sharply, with a bright twinkle in his eye, and said, "You never got the secret, did you, Bacher?" Eighteen years later I found this in "Whistler as I Knew Him," by Mortimer Menpes:

Only once I remember him really teaching us anything. He told it to us two pupils, and Sickert, I remember, took down every word on his cuff. He described how in Venice once he was drawing a bridge, and suddenly, as though in a revelation, the secret of drawing came to him. He felt that he wanted to keep it to himself, lest some one should use it—it was so sure, so marvelous. This is roughly how he described it: "I began first of all by seizing upon the chief point of interest—perhaps it might have been the extreme distance,—the little palaces and shipping beneath the bridge. If so, I would begin drawing that distance in elaborately, and then would expand from it until I came to the bridge, which I would draw in one broad sweep. If by chance I did not see the whole bridge, I would not put it in. In this way the picture must necessarily be a perfect thing from start to finish. Even if one were to be arrested in the middle of it, it would still be a fine and complete picture.

In this description of Whistler's secret of drawing, I find no change from his former methods. And, after all these years, I feel as certain now as I did then that Whistler had no secret of drawing, because in his earlier works on the Thames and in the portrait of his mother I find the same "sure, marvelous" drawing that is found in his later works.

A COCK-FIGHT STORY

APROPOS of something, Whistler once told a cock-fight story so vividly that only a man with a sailor instinct could tell it as well, mimic it so keenly, and enjoy it so thoroughly. It was a story of a strange species of the American cock, pictured to the smallest detail so beautifully that one forgot that it was a story.

Some American sailors were at a cock-fight in a seaport town in England, when one of them remarked to the owner of the champion:

"We have got an American cock on board that can whip any bird here."

"Go fetch 'im on," said the champion, "chuck 'im in and see. If 'e licks one bird, we 'ave plenty more to throw in that can lick hany blawsted Hamerican bird you can fetch 'ere."

"All right; we 'll bring one," said the sailors. When they got aboard they rigged up an American eagle. After their own manner, they painted, trimmed, spliced, and reefed fore and aft, transforming the eagle to a cock. When ready, they went ashore to pit their new American game-cock against all England.

At the pit, the sailors chucked in their cock, which looked around for other surprises as he backed close to the wall.

"Now bring on your birds!" yelled the sailors. A strutting cock was thrown into the pit, and was another surprise to the poor dismantled eagle. He backed up closer and closer to the wall, wondering what would happen next. The cock walked three times majestically around the circle, cuffing at his strange opponent, the eagle pitifully abashed and bedrabbled, crouching lower and lower, and looking around and above him for an explanation of what it all meant, while the crowd were yelling madly for the English fighter. The eagle made himself smaller and smaller, but at last, finding that he could get back no farther, and thinking that something was expected of him, suddenly loomed up to his great height, and, as the cock dashed at him again, stretched out his long claws and took his opponent by the neck.

Here Whistler ended, with an imitation by motions of what the eagle did. He stretched out his arm, shaped his hand

like a claw, which, by this time looked like a real one, drew it to his mouth, and, with one bite, pulled off the head, as he thought an eagle might do it. Then he looked blandly about the room, as the eagle had done, at the astonished crowd and said, "Now bring on your other birds."

ONE OF HIS LITTLE CONTROVERSIES

MUCH has been written about Whistler's controversies with his enemies; little has been written of his care and foresight in preparing for them. He undoubtedly made ready for many that never occurred.

It was one day early in 1880 that he asked me to go to various parts of Venice and copy certain street signs, giving me a list of those he wanted.

"Do the signs exactly as you see them. Don't write the words, but carefully print each letter. Watch the spaces, dots, and commas."

When I brought to him the carefully printed copies which I had made, he was greatly pleased, and said:

"They are just what I want."

I never knew why he wanted them until ten years later, when I came across these two letters. The first is from "The World," February 9, 1881.

AN EAGER AUTHORITY

Mr. Whistler knows how to defend himself so perkily that it is a pleasure to attack him. I hasten, therefore, with joy, to submit to you, dear Atlas, who are growing so very clever at your languages, the following crotchets and quavers—shall I call them. For Mr. Whistler is just now full of "Notes"—in American-Italian; they are from his delightful brown paper catalogue. To begin with, "Santa Margharita" is wrong; it must be either Margaritha or Margherita; the other is impossible Italian. Then who or what is "San Giovanni Apostolo et Evangelistoë?" Does the sprightly and shrill McNeill mean this for Latin? And is the "Café Orientale" intended to be French or Italian? It has an *e* too many for French, and an *f* too few for Italian. "Piazette" furthermore does duty for "Piazzetta." Finally I give up. "Campo Sta. Martin." I don't know what that can be. The Italian Calendar has a San Martino and a Santa Martina, but Sta. Martin is very curious. The catalogue is exceedingly short, but a few of the names are right.

AN ADMISSION

Whistler's reply was in the issue of February 16, 1881.

Touché!—and my compliments to your "Correspondent," Atlas, chéri—far from me to justify spelling of my own! But who could possibly have supposed an orthographer loose!

THE REAL GOLDFISH STORY, AS WHISTLER TOLD IT

THIS variation of a libel on Whistler appeared recently in a New York paper, and is one of a class embracing many species. It is as offensive now as was one of the same kind that I gave Whistler to read years ago in Venice.



Photographed by Otto H. Bacher, with "Detective" camera, before the days of the kodak

WHISTLER IN HIS TITE STREET STUDIO

Evidently, too, "ung vieuxx qui a moult roule en Palestine et aultres lieux!"

What it is to be prepared, though! Atlas, mon pauvre ami, you know the story of the witness who, when asked how far he stood from the spot where the deed was done, answered unhesitatingly—"sixty-three feet, seven inches!" "How, sir," cried the prosecuting lawyer, "how can you possibly pretend to such accuracy?" "Well," returned the man in the box, "you see I thought some damn fool would be sure to ask me, and so I measured."

Butterfly.

I was the one who did the "measuring."

"Whistler, who had suffered for lack of the necessaries of life, came to be able to dine his friends with vases of goldfish on the table, and to throw perfume into the vases at the close of the feast, killing the fishes, and causing them to spurt the perfumed water toward the guests in their expiring gasps."

Whistler told me the story. "Once and for all," as he put it, "so you may understand, Bacher, why I object to such silly trash as 'the goldfish story' which you have just brought me to read. I can't for the life of me, understand why your papers in America will print such silly twaddle with no point or reason for its

appearance; and what amazes me, is the vulgarity of it all and the vulgar way in which I am presented to your American readers. Why, if they must publish the goldfish story, do they leave out the point? You know Whistler never tells a story without a point. If they will take the trouble, any one of the papers in America can procure the copy of the goldfish story just as I told it, and as it was printed in one of the London papers.

"They will print rubbish rather than trouble themselves to get things right. Now, Bacher, Whistler will tell you the story as it occurred in Paris some years ago. You will see that Whistler had nothing to do with goldfish, as newspapers will have it, the credit belonging to my confrère, a very clever Frenchman. You will appreciate him and the story better if I tell you how clever and ingenious he was in the schools.

"If it happened that he had neither colors nor money to buy new tubes, he was not disconcerted or discouraged, as others might have been under like circumstances. No, he was far too clever and resourceful to get the 'blues' or think of suicide. He would get up cheerfully and look around for some student with a completely stocked palette and ask blandly: 'What kind of red is that you have on your palette? It seems particularly brilliant. I'll just take a little on my finger and try it. Thank you, it's very nice. Oh, yes; it is quite enough, thank you, much obliged,' and so on. Each person who gave other colors considered it a privilege and honor, and gave with pleasure. He got a bit of color here and a bit there until his palette was completely set for the day's work.

"One afternoon Whistler's ingenious friend came home from the schools earlier than usual. While looking from his window at the play of sunlight on the courtyard below, something new attracted him by the speck-like flashes that met his eye, and would come and go like darts of sun-rays reflected from some miniature mirror; they came from the landlady's window. 'Sure enough,' he thought; 'it is her window, and she has a new glass globe filled with fresh water and three little goldfish swimming prettily in it, enjoying the privilege of a warm sun-bath on the window-ledge.' His old grudge

against his landlady came to his mind, and with it a plot by which he could get even with her. He acted quickly and quietly. He got a pin, which he shaped into a neat little hook, and made it fast to a long piece of thread; he baited the hook, and let it down very carefully into the jar of shining goldfish; he caught one, and pulled it up through his window, unhooked the pretty little victim, laid it aside, and began to fish for another, which he soon secured. When he had succeeded in procuring all of them, he placed them in a frying-pan and fried them to a nice pale brown color." At this point Whistler stopped for a moment, rolled a cigarette, and watched the effect which his story had made. He smiled when he heard the obvious conclusion, and said: "No; he did not eat the fish. He was a genius—a rare genius. If he had not been, he would have stopped there and eaten them, as any one else would have done. No, he did n't stop there. He took up each little fish separately, and in turn put it on his line, walked silently to the window, carefully lowered it to the glass globe, and dropped the little fellow back into the water. When they were back in place, floating on the surface of the water, he closed the window, and left his apartment for a walk before sundown.

"His landlady was greatly shocked when she found her little fish all dead. In consternation, she called in her neighbors to examine them, and they declared that it was the heat of the sun that had fried the poor little goldfish."

The above story was related by Whistler to the writer in the Casa Jankovitz, Venice, 1880. Other accounts of the "goldfish story" are printed as having occurred in Venice in this same house, the owner of the goldfish being pictured as a beautiful countess, living on the floor below Whistler. This is not a fact, because the writer lived on the floor below him, and, moreover, there was no countess in the building that summer.

"WAS THAT A GOOD DIVE?"

"I WANT to make a good dive. You boys must show me how you do it when we reach deep water," Whistler remarked as his gondola pulled out from our house to a deep channel which was our favorite



to
Mrs. Bachner

"Arrangement in Gray & Black
Portrait of the painter's mother -

Whistler

"ARRANGEMENT IN GRAY AND BLACK—PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER'S MOTHER."
(OWNED BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT)

spot for bathing, because it was out of the line of regular traffic, and we were rarely disturbed by the swash of the large ocean steamers. The few dips Whistler had had previous to this from our cranky little craft did not discourage his eagerness to join us. He enjoyed the frolic with boyish enthusiasm. He would splash and break the water with his knees, owing to his inexperience in our American mode of diving.

He suggested that we change our irregular habits of bathing and set six o'clock in the morning as the proper time. He rigidly kept this hour, and insisted on every one of the boys being up at that time, ready to join him in his gondola at the foot of the steps on the Riva. And woe to the one who was not ready! His large, steady gondola which, from its peculiarity of construction, is known in Venice as a

barca, proved an excellent boat from which to dive. It would hold ten of us comfortably, including the faithful old gondolier, who was always careful to keep one place dry for Whistler's spotless white, well-laundered shirt, waistcoat, and trousers, in readiness for *il signore* to don after his bath. It was a wise precaution; even Whistler had splashed water into the boat.

Whistler would carefully arrange his hands in a prayer-like attitude, as most beginners do, then dive quickly and fearlessly. Once he dived too deep, frightening us all. It seemed as though he never would come up again. We were greatly relieved when we heard his voice, asking: "Was that a good dive? Were my knees all right? They did n't hit the water first this time, did they? It was a good dive, was n't it? Not so high, perhaps, as it

should be, but Whistler will do that by and by."

One day while swimming around the gondola, I saw Whistler talking to one of the boys, both standing upright on the flat, curved cross-board generally used as a support for the mast but employed by us as a diving-board. I was about to climb in, but changed my mind when I saw an opportunity for some fun. Acting quickly, and bracing my feet against the side of the boat, with my shoulders under water, I let go, and kicked the boat from me. It knocked them both overboard. Whistler struck upon his side, and went under. I heard a chuckle from the others before I dived out of sight, dreading Whistler's wrath on coming up. To my surprise, he was not angry; nor did he ask who did it. He simply said in that droll way of his, "Was that a good dive?"

WHISTLER AND HAMERTON

IN 1868, Philip Gilbert Hamerton published his volume "Etching and Etchers." In the preparation of this book he wrote to Whistler (Sept. 13, 1867), asking him to submit a set of proofs for his examination and for him to write about. Whistler paid no attention to the letter, and when the book was issued, the following comment was made relative to the "unanswered letter":

I have been told that, if application is made by letter to Mr. Whistler for a set of his etchings, he may perhaps, if he chooses to answer the letter, do the applicant the favour to let him have a copy for about the price of a good horse; but beyond such exceptional instances as this, Mr. Whistler's etchings are not in the market. First, the public would not buy and then the artist would not sell, so that there has been little commerce between them.

Whistler waited thirteen years before the proper time arrived for him to retaliate. It happened in about this way: Whistler was looking over my first edition of Hamerton's "Etchings and Etchers" in the Casa Jankovitz. After looking through the pictures, he came back to the chapter on himself, containing almost six pages of printed matter. He read every word of it. At the passage above quoted

he commented, "Yes, he wrote me for a set."

"Did n't you send them?" I asked.

"Of course not," was his answer.

"But why did n't you let him have them?"

"But why should Whistler?"

"I should have thought it would have done you some good," I added.

"But how could he? Now, see what he says," and he read: "'He may, perhaps, if he chooses to answer the letter, do the applicant the favour to let him have a copy for about the price of a good horse.' Can't you see he's angry because Whistler never answered his letter?"

Whistler borrowed the book, and copied many passages from it, putting them aside for future use.¹

Some time after this, he called to me loudly from his room above: "How do you spell Hamerton—with one *m* or two *m's*?"

"With one *m*," I yelled back.

"Oh, —— it! I spelled it with two!"

And in the same breath he added: "Good! So much the better. It will irritate; I will leave it so, and send it as it is."

He sent the letter, August 16, 1880, and it appeared in the "New York Tribune," September 12, 1880.

"Sir:—In Scribner's Magazine² for this month there appears an article on Mr. Seymour Haden, the eminent surgeon-etcher, by *a* Mr. Hamerton."

This letter did not appear with Hamerton misspelled, but the droll little "*a*" is there, and quite as stinging, as will be observed in the following, which appeared in the "New York Tribune," October 11, 1880, from which I quote the conclusion.

It is scarcely necessary that I should allude to Mr. Whistler's studied discourtesy in calling me "*a* Mr. Hamerton." It does me no harm, but it is a breach of ordinary good manners in speaking of a well-known writer.

Yours obediently,

P. G. Hamerton.

THE CHURCH BELLS

THE belfry of the church back of the Casa Jankovitz was near the rear windows of the upper floor of our house, close to

¹ See "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies," pp. 79, 98, 99, 100.

² Now THE CENTURY.



J. W. Alexander



Half-tone plate engraved by H. Davidson. From a portrait sketch from life, by J. W. Alexander

WHISTLER IN LONDON, 1886

Whistler's room. In warm days the windows were open, and the constant ringing of the bells annoyed him very much. His frequent question, "How long does the law of Venice permit a church bell to ring?" was amusing to all. The American consul told him that most churches pay no attention to the law, which, if enforced, would allow them to ring their bells two minutes only, stopping for a period of five minutes before beginning again.

Whistler timed the bells one day by his watch, and found they were running overtime. Reaching out from his window, he succeeded in silencing them by holding on to the rope with a crooked nail fastened into the end of a pole. Suddenly the belfry-door opened, a choir-boy appeared, and, seeing what was the cause of the trouble, hastily withdrew. Some one tried to ring the bell again, and Whistler held on to the rope as tightly as he could. The little door opened again, and this time the priest appeared in full vestments, looked with concern, and beckoned Whistler to desist. It was unfortunate to interfere with ceremonies and prayers, and worse to be caught. However, Whistler dashed furiously at the good priest with the language of the law and the annoyance of the bell, which, by the way, kept on ringing during the animated conversation that was growing louder and louder every minute. The good priest could not hear. He stooped over and grasped the bell-rope. The bell suddenly ceased. Whistler's object was attained. It was a ludicrous situation, and when the subject of their contention suddenly stopped, both smiled. The good priest understood and apologized. Whistler invited him to dinner, and they remained friends ever after.

WHISTLER'S WHITE LOCK

THE following quotation is from a New York paper, written since his death:

No single item in Whistler's appearance was so celebrated as the solitary silver lock that stood out so from among the mass of his hair. It was his oriflamme, his panache. It nodded defiantly wherever his warring spirit carried him. It shone with a new gleam as he scattered the glittering shafts of his bitter wit. Legends grew around it. One was that he put it in curl-papers every night. Another

was that it was really a sample of what the rest of his hair would have been if nature had been weakly allowed to take its course. A third was that he had sustained a blow there in his youth, and the hair on that spot grew white thereafter. "It is not a white feather," he said once. This was true. He had never been a coward.

On one occasion, we heard Whistler exploding with laughter. We recognized the shrill voice of the mistress of our house as she joined in the merriment at the entrance below. The loud *ha-ha's* were coming up-stairs, Whistler talking at the top of his voice in Italian, interrupted by the woman's Venetian screeches and dialect. Every one in the house rushed to the head of the stairs.

When he caught his breath, Whistler exclaimed: "The Madam here came up to me a moment ago, saying, 'I must brush off something that mars your appearance.' Think of it!" he exclaimed loudly, between peals of laughter. "And just think what she did! She tried to knock off Whistler's white feather!"

The white lock, dry and crisp, shot high up and out of a mass of black, curly hair that usually had the appearance of having had an over-application of hair-oil. It was a birth-mark, so he told me; one that persisted in other members of his family. His sister had a white lock, which she always endeavored to hide; a cousin had an eyebrow streaked with white.

Whistler always tried to make this blemish prominent, laboring before a mirror, holding it in one hand, and fluffing out his curls with the other. The last touch was always given to the white feather. The soft brown hat which he wore was always tilted back behind it. He would often say, "The white lock should be seen first when Whistler enters a drawing-room."

A RIVAL IN WHITE LOCKS

WHENEVER I found Whistler working in his window, I knew I was doomed to a late dinner. It mattered little if I came home afoot or by boat, his weather-eye guarded the only passage to and from the Piazza San Marco.

It was usually when he had no formal engagement on hand, at the time when

other men had finished their day's work and were thinking about dinner, that he loved to take up a copper-plate, place it on the ledge of his window, and go to work scraping or burnishing, sometimes rebiting or touching out here or there in parts, using his dry point, nursing the plate through difficult passages, until the last glimmer of afterglow, long past sundown. From the open window he would yell, "Bacher!" If I seemed deaf, he would repeat: "Bacher, you are to dine with me to-night, remember. When you get ready, come up here."

If he once saw one, there was no dodging him. If one had plans of his own, it was necessary to come and go by stealth. Once out of the house, he was full of fun, and his comments on incidents along the way caused side-splitting laughter. At a certain *trattoria*, the padrone was sure to greet the humorous Americans, and was specially attentive to the epicurean orders of Whistler, who was often exasperating to his companions in the amount of waiting required to get something to eat.

The padrone was a large, handsome man, with a sympathetic face. He was probably a younger man than Whistler; his closely cropped hair was dark, with numerous spots of gray about the size of a silver dollar. As I looked, a thought flashed through my mind.

"Now is my chance," thought I. "I won't be afraid to say it this time. Whistler is in good humor."

As the padrone moved away, I said very seriously to Whistler, "Look at the padrone's fine head! He has more than one white lock; he has half a dozen."

Whistler readjusted his monocle, and looked critically at the head of the vanishing proprietor, and then turned to me with a faint smile of appreciation, grunting: "Uh! How dare you say that! Can't you see he has the mange?"

THE EVOLUTION OF THE BUTTERFLY

THE earlier Thames etchings had no butterfly signatures; the first appeared in 1859. An early signature of this description is to be found on "The Fur Jacket." In "The Harmony in Flesh-Color and Green" are two butterflies hovering over his own; in "Battersea," one is painted white against a dark background. It will

be observed that each of these is painted on a rectangular shield.

Later signatures resemble the butterfly as we know it now, but in no case have I found it with a sting attached until the year 1880, when Whistler lived in the Casa Jankovitz. One day he found a scorpion, and impaled it upon his etching-needle. The vicious insect would strike in all directions, now and then hitting the handle of the needle with his curved spur.

"Look at the beggar now!" exclaimed Whistler, excitedly. "See him strike! Is n't he fine? Look at him! Look at him now! See how hard he hits! That's right—that's the way! Hit hard! And do you see the poison that comes out when he strikes? Is n't he superb?"

The insect seemed to captivate him completely, and I believe that the addition of the sting to his butterfly dates from this occurrence. In his writings, whenever he wished to emphasize a point, he sketched his butterfly with the sting directed toward the particular remark.

FAREWELL FÊTE TO WHISTLER

ABOUT the latter part of August, it was generally understood, that Whistler intended to return soon to London; the exact time of his departure was not known. About the same time, one of our fellow-students was to leave us for good, and return to his home in America. Such an event was usually marked by some kind of celebration, always a jolly good send-off.

On this dual occasion the affair was elaborate, with suggestions of oriental luxury. A large, open coal barge, with a twenty-foot coal-hole, was chartered for the purpose. Standing up in it, one could look over the sides. A complete transformation turned this shabby boat into a fairylike floating bower, festooned with the wealth of autumn. Sheafs of wheat, rye, oats, corn, and grasses, formed into columns, loomed up in artistic confusion. Between these, garlands of pumpkins, squashes, tomatoes, apples, oranges, and clusters of grapes were intertwined, with a multitude of Japanese lanterns. On a table were heaped huge piles of fruit and melons, some of the latter being broken open, and scattered around. Rich studio draperies, fastened above, led down to monster bowls of many salads, and to

flasks of Chianti. Other bottles dangled among the garlands above. The arrangement resembled some ancient feast pictured in the old galleries. The small decks fore and aft were manned with oarsmen, and under an American flag was placed a throne for the guests of honor.

The start was made about dusk from the end of the Riva near the Public Gardens. Whistler arrived very late in his gondola, when we were far out in the lagoons opposite the Doge's Palace. Until his arrival, we had been allowed simply to feast our eyes on the abundance that lay before us. The chief drew the first draught from an inelegant loving-cup, then passed it round in the manner of a pipe of peace, and so the ceremonies began. Toasts

and drinking of healths followed, and, later, as we floated upward with the tide along the Grand Canal, between beautiful palaces, we attracted the attention and interest of Americans and Venetians, many of whom followed us in gondolas. Rain made us seek shelter under the arch of the Rialto, where we remained until dawn, our coming awakening the boatmen who slumbered there. As daylight approached, there was a slight falling off in wit, wine, and song. The only incident that left a blot was when two men in light suits bunked in the forward cubby-hole, forgetting that it was a coal barge.

As it happened, Whistler was the last man to leave Venice. Long after our departure, he was still there, but he had had his send-off.



WILLIAM SHARP AND "FIONA MACLEOD"

BY ERNEST RHYS

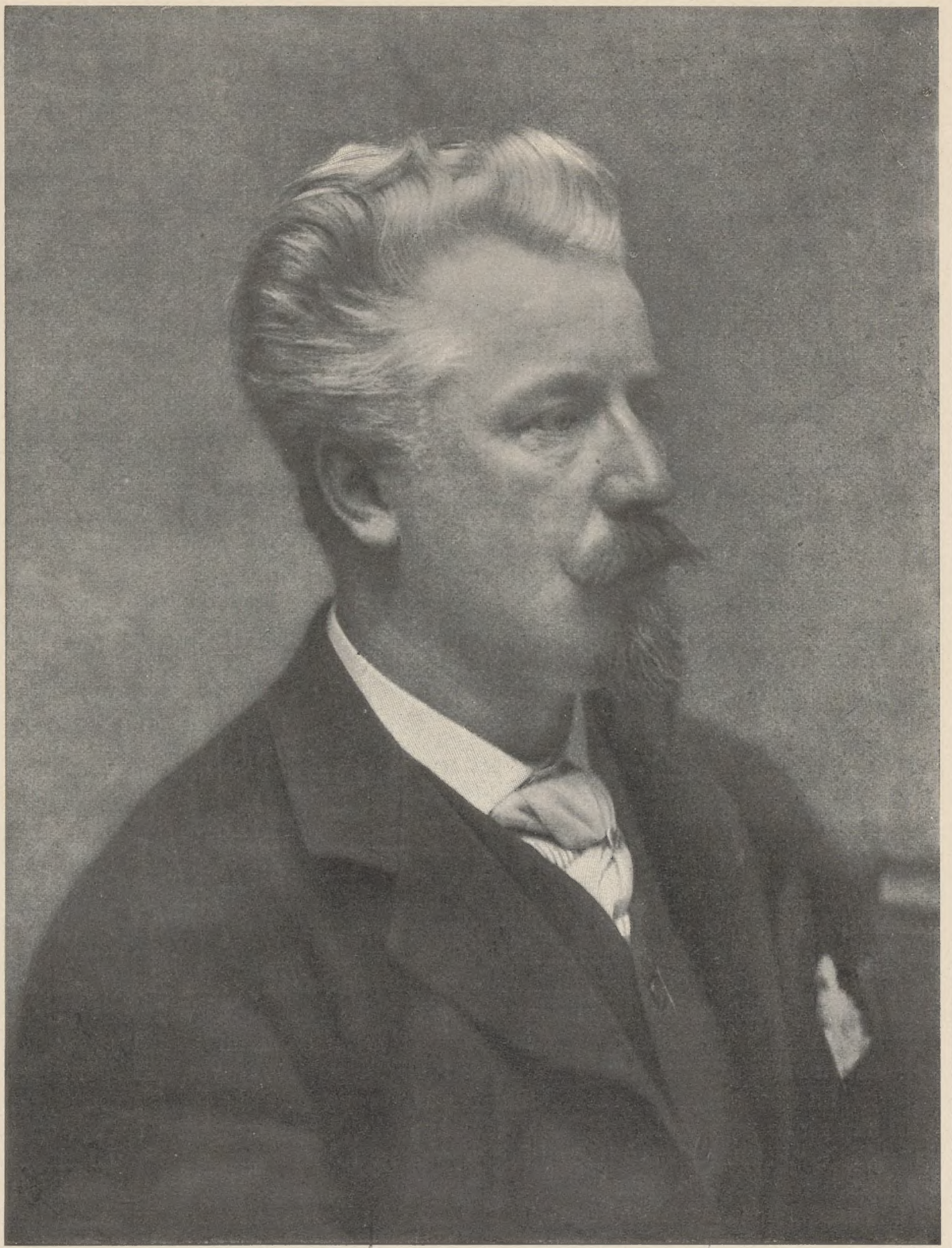
THE death in December, 1905, at Bronte, in Sicily, of William Sharp,¹ and the disclosure then made of the authorship of "Fiona Macleod," have still left many things unexplained in the writings that bear her name. The whole story, involving some obscure question of mental transference and an abnormal use of the romantic imagination, can hardly be divulged until Mrs. Sharp shall give us the promised memoirs of her husband. Meanwhile, I should like to call up from the reminiscences of a long friendship with him some episodes which may, in passing, help to disclose the sources, mysterious and deliberately obscured, of the "Fiona Macleod" tales and fantasies.

II

ONE summer morning, some twenty years ago, in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, I was

called down to an early visitor, and found waiting me a superb young man,—a typical Norseman, as I should have thought him,—tall, yellow-haired, blue-eyed. His cheeks were as rosy as a young girl's, his manners as frank and impulsive as a boy's. He had come with an introduction from a common friend (Mrs. William Bell Scott), a would-be contributor to a new periodical; but he soon passed from the discussion of an article on De Quincey to an account of himself that was joyously and consciously exuberant. He told of adventures in Australian backwoods, and of intrigues in Italy that recalled Cellini; and then he turned, with the same rapid flow of brief staccato sentences, to speak of his friend Mr. Swinburne's new volume of poems, or of the last time he walked along Cheyne Walk to spend an evening with Rossetti. He appeared to know everybody, to have been everywhere. Finally, though he had apparently been sitting up all the night be-

¹ William Sharp was born near Paisley, Scotland, in 1856. He died at the home of his friend the Duke of Nelson and Bronte, Castle Maniace, lying to the west of Mount Ætna.



From a photograph by the Duke of Nelson and Bronte, at Castle Maniace, Sicily, in 1905
Half-tone plate engraved by H. Davidson

Yours most sincerely
William Sharp

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